

ENCLOSURE No. II.

Anglo-Polish Staff Conversations, 1939.

REPORT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION.

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I.—INTRODUCTION.

CONVERSATIONS with the Polish General Staff took place on the 23rd and 24th, 25th and 30th May, and were recorded in French by a Polish General Staff Officer, and submitted to both parties for approval.

The approved versions were signed on the 1st June.

The Polish Officers taking part were :—

- Brig.-Gen. Stachiewicz : Chief of General Staff.
- Admiral Swirski : Chief of Polish Navy.
- Brig.-Gen. Ujejski : Chief of Air Staff in General Staff.
- Colonel Jaklicz : 2nd Deputy Chief of General Staff.

and on one occasion :—

- Lt.-Col. Orski : 4th Bureau General Staff.
- Major Dziewanowski : General Staff, acted as Secretary.

2. The Polish Officers maintained a most cordial spirit, and laid bare, with the utmost frankness, their most secret information with one exception. The British Delegation was unable to respond so freely, owing to the fact that they were not fully conversant with the details of the present military plans of the United Kingdom. It may have been that this caused the Poles to withhold details regarding their initial concentration arrangements, but it in no way affected the course of the conversations.

II.—ALIGNMENT.

3. As will be seen later, the Poles have been solely preoccupied with the idea of a main German attack directed on themselves alone, and therefore their interest was mainly in the attitude of their neighbouring States. The possible action of distant ones has received little, if any, attention, and, moreover, the situation with regard to two of them, Turkey and Russia, has changed very recently. In general, their views are, except as regards Hungary, the same as ours.

Hungary.

4. The Poles state that Hungary will neither join the Germans nor acquiesce in the use by German Armies of their territory. They say the Hungarians have definitely made this known to Germany, and they affirm that there is a strong resistance in Hungary to all attempts by Germany to obtain a dominating influence. We do not share the Polish view, which we think is largely based on historic ties and sentiment towards a people whose social structure is very similar to their own. They further believe that Hungary would be afraid to attack Roumania. They have a low opinion of the military value of the Hungarian Army, which they say is badly equipped, without reserves of war material, indifferently trained, and still imbued with the military ideas of 1918.

Russia.

5. The Poles still regard the Russians with suspicion and aversion. They do not wish to enter into direct relations in peace time with a view to co-operation in war, pleading that this would be a provocation to Germany. This we regard as an excuse; the real reason is they fear that it will lead to the employment of Russian troops in Poland, and they are afraid that, once there, it may be impossible to get rid of them, and, further, that they may bolshevise the population, especially in the Eastern districts.

They even look with disfavour on the suggestion that, if Lithuania were the object of German aggression, Russia might send troops to her assistance through the northern corner of Poland.

They agree, somewhat reluctantly, that they might accept air assistance from Russia, and allow them to establish the necessary ground organisation in Poland. They were non-committal on the subject of using Russian naval bases.

Poland draws supplies of raw material from Russia in peace, and looks to a continuance of this in war, which is essential to enable their factories to maintain production.

They would also willingly accept Russian finished war material in war time, but are reluctant to start the necessary negotiations to that end in peace time, and it would need very careful diplomatic handling to bring the two parties together to discuss the arrangements to put this into force.

This is discussed later, Section IX.

Roumania.

6. The Polish interpretation of the Polish-Roumanian alliance is that it provides for military co-operation only in the event of an attack on either by Russia, and is not designed to have effect if Germany is the aggressor.

The Poles do not expect Germany to make any attack on Roumania until she has already put Poland out of court—as German communications in a war with Roumania are too exposed to Polish attack.

They have therefore no plans for mutual co-operation against German aggression and no conception of a common stable eastern defensive front, necessitating the employment of a certain number of German divisions to watch it.

The Poles were very uncommunicative about the Roumanian Army, and its military value, no doubt from a feeling of loyalty to a country that has been their ally for most of the post-war period.

Latvia and Estonia.

7. They will get no military assistance from these States. They even doubt the possibility of getting war supplies through these countries, as they might put a very strict interpretation on the meaning of neutrality. In addition, Germany would probably have complete control of the Baltic.

Lithuania.

8. The Poles have no expectation of help, as they have no treaty with her. But they are seriously concerned with the possibility of German aggression into Lithuania, which they would regard as a definite threat to their independence, and they are anxious to know the attitude of Great Britain if they went to the assistance of Lithuania.

After consultation with the Ambassador I gave, somewhat diffidently, the answer that if Poland informed us that she felt her independence threatened, and was thus obliged, in self-defence, to take action, we were bound to come to her assistance in every possible way, including military action—but we feel that the question should be more clearly and definitely answered by the diplomats.

The Poles do not expect the Soviets to take any steps to help Lithuania against German aggression, and point out that to do so the Russians would need to cross Polish Territory, but, on the other hand, they consider the Soviets will come to the aid of Latvia and Estonia to resist German attack.

III.—POLISH STRATEGIC CONCEPTION.

9. The Poles are convinced that the Germans will, at the beginning of the war, direct their whole available weight against Poland, maintaining a defensive attitude on all other fronts until Poland has been put out of court. All their plans are based on this conception, and they have really very little idea of what action they would take in any other situation, beyond a general statement that it would facilitate the counter-offensive which they always intend to make.

10. They are thus dealing with their own problem in its most menacing aspect, and the one which presents the greatest difficulties. They are under no delusions that this will cause them tremendous losses, involve the abandonment of a large part of their country, the cessation of all trade, except across the Russian and Roumanian frontier, the loss of their Silesian industrial resources and perhaps of others further inland, but they face this catastrophe with a certain rather admirable confidence that they will always be able to maintain a front against their enemy somewhere in Poland, and that the eventual defeat of Germany is certain as she will not be able to stand the pressure of a long war against France and England.

IV.—GERMAN FORCES.

11. The Poles reckon the total mobilised strength of the German Army to be from 110 to 120 divisions, of which they believe the main weight will be directed on Poland alone, leaving holding forces on all other frontiers, until the defeat of Poland liberates more troops for an offensive in the West.

12. They think that the action of the land armies will be supported by unremitting air attack, the objectives of this air attack being, firstly, the enemy air forces and ground establishments; secondly, vital points on the Lines of Communication; and, thirdly, industrial establishments, especially those supplying the needs of the Army. This is the order of priority of air attack, as given in a recent secret German publication *Luftrieführung*, of which they have obtained a copy. The Poles do not consider that any question of danger to civilians will cause the Germans to shrink from bombing any of these objectives in order to obtain the required result.

13. The order of battle of the German Army, according to Polish General Staff calculations, is given in Annex I, and of their Air Force in Annex II.

14. The Polish Naval Staff consider that the German Navy will attack their sea coast and the Hel peninsula.

V.—COURSE OF THE WAR. OPENING PHASES.

15. On this assumption, the Poles conclude that the initial dispositions of the German Army will be as follows:—

Eastern Striking Force—

Corps from East Prussia.

Stettin.

Berlin.

Dresden.

Munster (part).

Hamburg.

Hanover.

Nürnberg.

Total, 61 active and reserve divisions.

16 Landwehr divisions.

Defensive Fronts—

(a) Western—

Corps from Stuttgart.
Wiesbaden.
Kassel.

17-20 divisions.

(b) Dutch frontier and north-west sea coast—

Corps from Munster (part).
8 divisions.

(c) Bohemia and Yugoslav frontier—

Corps from Vienna.
Munich.
Salzburg.

9 divisions.

N.B.—This last group seems rather inconsistent as regards the number of divisions compared with Corps. On another occasion reference was made to the employment of the Vienna Corps on the right flank of the advance on Poland, which it is thought is more probable.

16. The Eastern Striking Force is expected to be concentrated as follows:—

Pomerania—20 divisions + 5 Landwehr divisions.

Objective.—The Corridor-Torun Bydgoszez Area and join hands with East Prussia movement-Warsaw.

Silesia—26 divisions + 6 Landwehr divisions.

Objective.—Lodz-Warsaw-Industrial Centre.

Moravia—10 divisions + 2 Landwehr divisions.

Objective.—Polish Silesia-Krakow.

East Prussia—5 divisions + 3 Landwehr divisions.

17. The employment of the East Prussian troops is visualised as being undoubtedly offensive, in one of two alternatives:—

1. *Due South on Warsaw.*

This course represents a threat at the very heart of Poland, but has the disadvantage that it is disconnected from the main advance from Pomerania, and gives the Poles the opportunity of defeating them before support arrives. For this reason the Poles do not expect it unless and until the Germans have considerably reinforced the East Prussian Corps with others (the Hamburg Corps is considered a likely reinforcement).

The Poles therefore consider it of the utmost importance to obtain any information or indications of movement by sea, and if such movement should not take place until war began, that action should be taken against the German transports, and suggest that England might be able to assist, which would have important results at the very outset. A calculation of transport necessary to move German troops to East Prussia is given in Annex III, paragraph 7.

2. *South-West on Torun.*

This course is more prudent for the existing East Prussian Corps, as it would be supported by the main advance from Pomerania. It is therefore the most likely, with the present forces.

A third line of attack, eastwards towards Grodno and the Wilno railway, has been considered, but as nothing more than a raid.

18. In addition to the Naval attack mentioned in paragraph 14 above, the Polish Naval Staff consider that German Naval action in the Baltic will be mainly confined to safeguarding the sea communications to East Prussia and the iron ore trade from Sweden.

19. The Poles fully recognise the strength of this menace—a preponderance of 2 to 1 in land forces alone. They realise that it will be impossible to hold the corridor and the Poznan salient, and have no intention of employing their strength in trying to do so except at Hel (see Annex III).

Hel is intended to serve, after the Germans have taken Gdynia and the sea coast, as a naval base from which to attack German sea communications with East Prussia. This they consider as of prime importance, see paragraph 24, but while it is possible they might retain hold of the Hel peninsula after the loss of Gdynia, the harbour would come under shell-fire and air bombardment, and its utility is problematical. Polish naval efforts could not therefore be of long duration.

20. They intend to conserve their forces by retiring to a position which will be both shorter and will give natural facilities for defence. They hope to be able to keep intact a central reserve for use in a counter-offensive, especially if the Germans start drawing troops from the East to reinforce the west.

This position includes the five following parts:—

- (a) The East Prussian frontier.
- (b) A salient to cover Bydgoszez and Torun.
- (c) A line running roughly north and south from the neighbourhood of Inowraclaw through Kolo to Czestochowa. This is a region where a network of lakes and rivers gives the Poles an excellent framework for various defensive positions.
- (d) The small fortified line which the Poles already have in the Katowice area, and which they are now extending both northwards and southwards.
- (e) Carpathians.

21. The General Staff are starting preliminary work on these lines—opposite East Prussia they have begun to construct defensive works, they are working at the organisation of defence of the Carpathians—and in the central lake and river region they are studying various alternative lines of defence and anti-tank measures, establishing a number of dumps of material (concrete, barbed wire, &c.) and organising the civil population to undertake the work when ordered.

22. They intend to carry out extensive demolitions before giving up the western districts, and they have organised a secret service to operate behind the German armies—a method of warfare in which they have much experience and have employed with success against Russia.

VI.—LATER PHASES.

23. The Polish conception of the course of the war leads to eventual launching of a counter-offensive.

While they are bringing the German armies to a standstill, they expect to be able to take local offensives with their cavalry and motorised brigade against columns of German motorised troops who find themselves unable to advance by demolitions on the main roads and by the inability of country roads to carry the motor vehicles in large numbers (see Annex IV).

24. They have also the conception of a strategic counter-stroke into East Prussia, which they categorically state will be the first object of their attack, as it is always a threat directed at the very heart of their country. The importance which they attach to East Prussia seems to be equally shared by the Germans, as the Poles state that, besides the field defences more or less along the frontier, through the lake and forest area, which is provided with concrete emplacements, barbed wire and anti-tank obstacles, the Germans are making Königsberg into a sort of magnified bridgehead, protected by strong fortifications extending from the neighbourhood of Labian to that of Braunsberg.

25. There is undoubtedly too much optimism in this conception. The Poles have a much lower opinion of the German army than we have. They bring forward, in support of their opinion—

- (a) The shortage of N.C.Os., Officers and Staff Officers, which will limit the expansion of the German Army.

- (b) Low standard of training, due to the fact that for many years since 1918 no yearly classes were conscripted.
- (c) Lack of heavy artillery.
- (d) *Over motorisation.*

In Poland metalled roads, comparatively plentiful in Poznan, get fewer and fewer as one moves East: and lateral roads less frequent. They are not very strongly built, and would suffer much from continuous heavy traffic. They are unfenced, with a ditch separating them from the fields. There are frequent country tracks, between villages and farms, but innocent of all metal—and in wet weather become deep in mud. Any bridges on them are generally wooden and only suitable for local traffic, *i.e.*, horsed carts. These are quite unusable by heavy motor vehicles, except in very dry weather, and even then a low-lying patch may bog a lorry.

A column of motorised troops, moving on one of the metalled roads, and encountering an obstacle, *e.g.*, destroyed bridge, is bound to halt. The nearest metalled lateral road may be miles behind, to reverse the column to gain this road is no easy task, and if it does so, the column would only gain access to another road, full of troops.

In fact, the whole advance is delayed until the obstacle can be made good, and the troops reduced to a defensive attitude.

- (e) Poor quality of German mechanised vehicles, as shown in Austria.
- (f) The length that motorised formations will take on the few roads, which will necessitate several divisions using the same road—one broken bridge will halt a column of dozens of miles in length, which will be unable to get off the road, or to reverse and take another road, and will be open to cavalry attack.
- (g) Consequent difficulties in petrol supply.

26. The Poles forget that their Army also suffers from some of these defects, from more natural causes, and that weaknesses in motorisation in some directions are balanced by strength in others.

If the German effort is directed against them, in the proportions given above, and with intensive air action, it is to be feared that the Poles will be driven into the Eastern and wilder parts of their country, and that organised resistance may collapse, unless another miracle on the Vistula saves them.

27. The Poles are very anxious to learn what action in the West the allies can take to reduce the pressure in the East, but it is not likely that intensive air action on our part will do more than attract a few machines from the East, while the effects of a land attack on the Siegfried Line are outside the knowledge of the Delegation. The Poles also seem disappointed to learn that naval action in the Baltic is not envisaged by the British Navy on anything but a very small scale, and then only if a base is available.

VII.—POLISH FORCES.

28. To oppose this powerful German invading force, the Poles are able to mobilise an army composed of:—

- 30 active divisions,
- 10 reserve divisions,
- 11 cavalry brigades,
- 1 armoured brigade,

which is practically all on a horsed basis and is short of heavy artillery and armoured fighting vehicles. The aviation consists mainly of medium-range bombers, the fighters represent only 30 per cent. of the total and are of poor quality. The Air Force will be used almost entirely for army co-operation, bombing raids into Germany will only be undertaken in the form of reprisals when conditions are favourable and unlikely to lead to undue losses.

29. The details of the Polish Army are given in Annexes V and VI.

The whole of this Army will be used in the operations against Germany—the remaining frontiers of Poland (Lithuanian and Russian) will continue to be guarded by the Frontier Guard Corps alone.

30. The actual zones of concentration were not communicated to the Delegation, the excuse being that to explain the movements and other details was a matter of some complexity and would take too long in these preliminary conversations, and had better be kept till a more detailed study of the Allied War Measures was made, but I feel that the real reason for this, the only occasion of any reticence, was that I was unable to give corresponding information myself (see paragraph 2).

But from various indications it seems that there will be—

- (a) An army group, sufficiently strong to oppose an advance from East Prussia—*i.e.*, somewhere in the area north of Modlin.
- (b) An Army group in the Bydgoszcz Torun area.
- (c) An Army group in S.W. Poland and Polish Silesia.
- (d) A group watching the passes of the Carpathians.

It may be conjectured that there will also be an Army group between (b) and (c) above, *i.e.*, in the Koło area, and one or two in central reserve.

31. It is generally believed that the efficiency of the Polish Army has increased greatly in the last few years—the training of the officers especially, and the n.c.o.'s is of a much better standard—staff work and higher command has improved, and administration is efficient. It is remarkable that it is generally considered that corruption is now rare. There seems to be a great deal more method than there was—work is well thought out.

32. The Army and the country seem to be imbued with a spirit of courage and determination—and quite prepared to accept the consequences which may come from a refusal to give way to Hitler's wishes. Many of them think a war is inevitable and it is better to have it now and get it over, as they state their belief that the situation in Germany is favourable to Poland now, and may not be later. The grounds for this belief are not apparent, nor could the Poles explain them, and it is probably only another case of light-hearted optimism. All Poles believe that the German Army is not so efficient and strong as the speeches of German leaders would like the world to believe.

33. They expect the war to come in the harvest time, and have therefore taken steps to have all crops burnt in the invaded regions.

VIII.—WEAKNESSES OF THE POLISH ARMY.

34. The weakness of the Polish Army is the shortage of equipment.

There are enough extra infantry battalions on mobilization to form the nucleus of five fresh divisions, but there is not the equipment for them or for the other arms to make up these divisions. There are some 600,000 trained reservists who are surplus.

They do not mobilise more than 40 divisions, because that is the number for which they have enough reserve war material to last for three months' war. No fresh divisions will be formed, unless they can be provided with full mobilisation equipment and three months' reserve put aside for them. They wish to increase this three months' reserve to six months.

35. Moreover, although great strides have been taken in the last 2-3 years to increase the home war industries, Poland's war factories are only able to cover a proportion of the expected wastage and expenditure in war, and that only if production is not reduced either by enemy action or by shortage of raw materials or skilled labour. All these factors are likely to come into play, with unhappy results. A table showing how far, at present capacity, factories can make good losses, is given in Annex VIII.

36. The energy that has been put into the development of war industries in the last 2-3 years is almost incredible. The delegation visited factories already working, where two years ago was uninhabited forest. The very latest type of machines had been installed, many bearing the date 1938, pipe-lines had been laid for some 200 kilometres to obtain natural gas as fuel from sources in the Carpathians—and colonies built, with social services for the workmen. This development is still in progress, new factories are projected and existing ones to be expanded. In the case of certain newly put up factories, output will not commence before the end of the year at the earliest.

37. These factories are scattered about in the Central Industrial Area, south of Warsaw, so as to be well back from the frontier, where so many existing factories, mines, blast furnaces, &c., are situated. But they suffer from certain disabilities which cannot be removed by lavish expenditure of money.

- (a) *Shortage of skilled labour.*—In spite of all accounts of the intelligence of the peasant turned into workman, of the schools where each man is trained, but only trained to one process and so forth, we remain of the belief that the shortage exists and must continue. As regards engineers, it seems that enough young men are being turned out by the engineering universities.
- (b) *Shortage of tools* (cutters, drills, &c.)—Though at the start of work in a new factory a good reserve supply is laid down, it seems doubtful if wastage can be made good in war, even though factories are designed to produce their own tools.
- (c) *Shortage of raw materials.*—Certain raw materials are available in Poland, but from the Upper Silesian frontier district chiefly, and this supply would be cut off in war. Factories are being required to lay in six months' reserve stocks, but this is not complete yet.
- (d) *Difficulty of import of raw materials.*—Poland gets in peace, and would also in war, certain raw materials from Russia, but to keep her war industry going, especially with the expansion that is in progress, *it would be absolutely necessary* to augment the import of raw and partly manufactured materials from other sources, and to find the means of getting them to Poland. This is discussed later (Section IX).
- (e) *Vulnerability to Air Attack.*—In spite of dispersion, these new factories remain vulnerable to the air. A series of new buildings, in a forest, with new roads and railways between them, rather attracts than avoids observation from the air—and, although these establishments are being provided with A.A. guns (to be manned by the workers), they are still vulnerable. The Poles are optimistic in this also—they quote that in Spain factories were never really stopped by air raids. They have done no camouflage, nor constructed any shelters for personnel. They have an unjustifiable faith in the hitting power of the A.A. gun.
- (f) *Ready cash.*—The cost of the new industries, of partial mobilisation and other expenses due to the abnormal situation, have drained the country of cash. They cannot find the money for current needs—wages, for instance, and above all for the purchase of raw materials and half-manufactured products which they need to keep their industries at work. Lack of ready money will reduce the already inadequate output.

IX.—MAINTENANCE OF WAR SUPPLIES.

38. The Polish Army, as now organised, can keep the field from its reserve stocks for 2-3 months. Its existing factories can keep it going for another period, but the factors are so liable to change that it is difficult to give an estimate of this period. No one can say—

- (a) How many factories will fall into the hands of the German armies.
- (b) How far output of others will be reduced by air action.
- (c) Whether they can be fed with raw and half-manufactured materials.
- (d) Will the necessary skilled labour be available.

But, for argument's sake, let us suppose they will be able to keep the army going for a further 2-3 months. In other words, unless Allied assistance is given to Poland, she will be out of the war in 6 months at the most.

39. The following sections refer in particular to Army supplies, the question of Air supplies being dealt with in Annex VII, devoted to the whole question of Air assistance.

40. In order that Poland may put her whole weight into the war, it seems that the problem is in two parts:—

- (1) The provision of war material now to enable her to use her surplus trained men as soon as war begins and to increase her fighting power.

(2) The organisation of a system of maintenance and replacement of war losses. This, in its turn, means—

- (a) provision and maintenance of finished war material,
 - (b) provision of raw and half-manufactured material for her industries,
- and in all cases, cash.

41. If the Western Powers look upon Poland as an Ally, and count upon her to make her utmost contribution to the combined war effort, it seems axiomatic that any help that can now be given is not merely for the benefit of Poland, but is of equal benefit to the Western Powers. Such aid is—cash.

Immediate cash should show a return in an increase in the number of divisions in the Polish Army, and in giving them a longer run for their money by enabling them to work their factories to the full, and thus produce many of the requirements of new divisions and for reserve stocks.

42. But cash will not provide all these requirements, but only such as can be manufactured in Poland. To increase the fighting power, Poland requires finished war material over and above what she can produce herself—namely, aeroplanes, fighters especially—A.F.Vs.—and heavy artillery. To wait until war begins before sending this material aid would rob the provision of much of its value. The normal routes of importation would be closed, cargo space hard to obtain and long journeys necessary before the goods arrived, and time would be lost in teaching the recipients how to use them. In fact, the Polish Army might be so badly hammered before then as to be unable to make proper use of them. To sum up the first part of the problem as stated above: to increase the power of resistance of the Polish Army at the outbreak of war needs the provision of cash and war material now, and the organisation of a maintenance service.

43. The second part of the problem is not so simple. To build up such vast stores of arms, half manufactured and raw materials in peace, so as to enable the Army to live on its reserves for the duration, would be impossible for financial reasons. It is, therefore, a question of assuring a constant flow of material, and this means the selection of the means of transport and the sources of supply.

44. As Germany will control the Baltic, and regular passage of ships through the Western Mediterranean may be impracticable until the Italian fleet is neutralised, there remain only the following routes:—

- (a) By Murmansk (and Archangel in summer) through Russia. The Murmansk railway has very poor capacity; there is a canal as an alternative.
- (b) By Transiberian railway. A very long journey, also of limited capacity.
- (c) Through the Eastern Mediterranean to a Black Sea port.

45. But the use of these long and risky movements could be greatly minimised by using Russia as a source of supply, for such requirements as she can produce, and these are—

(a) *Raw materials and semi-manufactures.*

In order to ensure a regular supply in war time, it is desirable that steps be taken in peace to study the question in detail, both as regards the quantities of the different items that can be delivered and the machinery for delivering them, and very probably the financial consequences (see Annex IX).

(b) *Russian war material.*

The Poles have signified their willingness to accept this, but it introduces the complication of two types of equipment in use concurrently and the necessity for teaching the troops to use the new type, which must be done beforehand.

Steps must here also be taken in peace to ensure the regular supply in war.

(c) *Manufacture by Russia of Polish war material.*

This is probably the most satisfactory answer to the problem. If such manufacture was agreed upon, it would necessitate the supply to Russian factories of jigs and tools of Polish pattern beforehand, in peace time. The

placing, then, of orders in peace would encourage the manufacture, ensure the continuance, and provide the Poles with the additional material which they so badly want, both to increase their present low reserves and to enable the creation of more divisions. But it also requires previous study.

46. In fact, the use of Russia in any way as a source of supply demands preliminary consultation, agreement, and the drawing up of definite plans, and, in view of the reluctance of the Poles to enter into military conversations with Russia, it calls for very tactful diplomatic handling to bring the two parties together and to help them to come to terms.

47. When the Italian fleet is neutralised, and no longer able to interfere with traffic in the Mediterranean, the passage of all sorts of supplies to Poland will be easier and sources far wider, and it will not be so difficult to ensure the supply of raw material which is lacking, and possibly of machinery and semi-manufactures. It would also be possible to supply finished war material, but, if this is not of Polish type, the complication of two types comes in again. Whereas if Polish type is to be supplied, it again needs the provision of Polish jigs and tools well beforehand—thus duplicating the Russian supply—and it would seem better to organise the latter, which is always transportable to Poland, rather than a foreign source, which will be less accessible at the moment of Poland's greatest need.

48. As regards Naval supplies, it is improbable that the Polish Navy will be able to base in Polish waters for long after the outbreak of war. Its supplies therefore depend on whether certain units will be able to escape through Danish waters to England, or would be able to base themselves on Russia. In the former case, the supplies for units built in England, France or Holland presents less difficulty.

X.—ALLIED MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

49. Besides material help, the Poles have, again rather optimistically, hoped for some visible military aid, namely:—

- (a) *Naval action in the Baltic.*—They have been informed that unless a base is available, British action could only be confined to submarine raids. These, in view of the nebulous targets offered, and the risks entailed, are not envisaged at the outset. The present state of fortifications at Hel does not warrant the establishment of stocks of fuel, &c., there prior to the outbreak of war, and it is unlikely that it will be available as a base at a later period.
- (b) *Air Assistance.*—They would like some air forces to be based on Poland, but suggest as an alternative using Poland as a refuelling base between flights from England to Poland and back again. The difficulties of organising, in peace, the ground staff necessary for either of these plans was pointed out, but they may return to the subject later.
- (c) *Attack by land forces on the Western front.*—The Delegation not being cognisant of the Anglo-French plan could give no encouragement.
- (d) *Intensive air action.*—We stated that our whole Air Force would be occupied on protecting the Home Country, which included air offensives with Germany; but the Poles hoped our targets would be further east, so as to touch the Germans operating against Poland.

50. The Poles fully understand that our Naval action will eventually bring pressure upon the whole German war effort, and that our air action will demand counter-action by the mass of German aviation, but they hanker for some form of action that will have a direct influence on the course of operations in the East, at the moment it is most dangerous to Poland, *i.e.*, the first few weeks, even days, of the war.

51. Should the outcome of the conversations with Russia be satisfactory, it would be desirable to encourage the Polish and Russian naval staffs to discuss concerted plans for action in the Baltic.

XI.—MAIN GERMAN OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST.

52. The Poles have hardly considered what action they would take if the Germans staged their main attack in the west (whether or not through the Low Countries), and held the Polish front defensively. They have no schemes prepared for this, and merely suggest that it will be easier for them to pass to the offensive in the most suitable direction. When asked in which direction, they could only reply that it depended on the situation at the time—in other words, they have got no offensive plan, and they treat the situation just the same as that where the main German blow is on the East, when they decide on the local counter-offensive according to the situation. But East Prussia is always in their mind as an objective of first importance.

53. They think the Germans might leave about 30 divisions (including 10 Landwehr) on the Polish front, the Army Corps from East Prussia, Stettin, Berlin and Dresden. A further 10 divisions (Corps of Vienna and Salzburg) would be kept in Bohemia and opposite the Yugoslav frontier, which would leave some 70-80 divisions for the West.

54. The Poles again say they would not be able to use their Air Force for long-distance bombing raids in Germany, unless the attendant circumstances were very propitious, but would use it for Army Co-operation. Such a course would compel the Germans to leave, they estimate, some 20 per cent. (200 machines according to their figures) of fighters against Poland, but very few bombers. This view is somewhat optimistic, since, in view of Polish air inferiority, it is probable that the Germans could contain it with a smaller number of fighters.

XII.—MUTUAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN POLISH AND BRITISH GENERAL STAFFS.

Peace.

55. It was agreed that it was desirable that there should be a closer personal contact between the senior officers of the two staffs concerned—and that they should get to know each other by an exchange of visits—apart from any mission that might be sent from one to another for purposes of getting war material, &c.

It was desirable that there should be a freer exchange of information and of views between the two Intelligence Staffs. Comments and criticism would be welcomed as well as exchange of items of information.

War.

56. It was agreed that the presence of a military mission at the headquarters of the other ally was the only practicable way of assuring free exchange of information and co-ordination of action.

There was some suggestion that a common cypher should be employed between the two parties—but in the end it was recognised to be superfluous, and that each party should communicate with its Mission in its own cypher.

Again, some idea of having special means of communication between the two General Headquarters and their Missions was broached, but it was eventually agreed that the means of ensuring communication had better be left to be settled by the experts in this matter.

XIII.—GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

1. The Poles expect the main German attack to be directed against them.
2. The Poles can put 40 divisions into the field, against some 80 German divisions.
3. Their air force is far inferior, and will only be used for Army Co-operation. They lack fighters.
4. They do not intend to hold their western frontier, but to withdraw to a shorter line of rivers and lakes, somewhat east of the old German-Russian frontier.
5. They optimistically hope for chances of local counter offensives, and keep East Prussia in mind as a possible objective.
6. They have over half a million trained reservists surplus to mobilisation strength, but cannot organise them for lack of equipment.

7. They are building up reserves of war material, and at present have enough to replace 2-3 months' wastage.
8. The output of their factories is only sufficient to cover about 50 per cent. of their losses.
9. As newly built factories come to production, and others projected are built, output will increase, provided they are not interfered with by enemy action, and they are able to ensure supplies of raw material and skilled labour. All these factors tending to reduce output are likely to take effect.
10. To keep the Polish Army in the field outside help is necessary.
11. This may take the form of:—
 - (a) Provision of war material now, especially fighting planes and guns.
 - (b) Organisation of supply of war material from outside, and of raw material.
 - (c) Credits or loans.
12. Owing to transport difficulties elsewhere, Russia is the most suitable source of supply.
13. To ensure this supply, negotiations should be started without delay. If Russia is to provide war material of Polish pattern, the necessary jigs and tools should be given to Russia at once.
14. Poland does not welcome the idea of Russian troops coming to her aid on Polish soil, but would accept the help of Russian air forces working from bases in Poland. She would accept Russian war material.
15. The Poles welcome the idea of closer collaboration between their General Staff and ours, both in peace and war.
16. Polish naval strength cannot affect the course of operations in Eastern Europe, but at the outset it may force the Germans to retain naval units in the Baltic disproportionate to its strength.
17. No part of the Polish coast is suitable for a base for British naval units.

(Signed)

E. CLAYTON, *Brig., G.S.*

H. B. RAWLINGS, *Captain, R.N.*

A. P. DAVIDSON, *Group Captain,
R.A.F.*

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1.
June 12, 1939.*

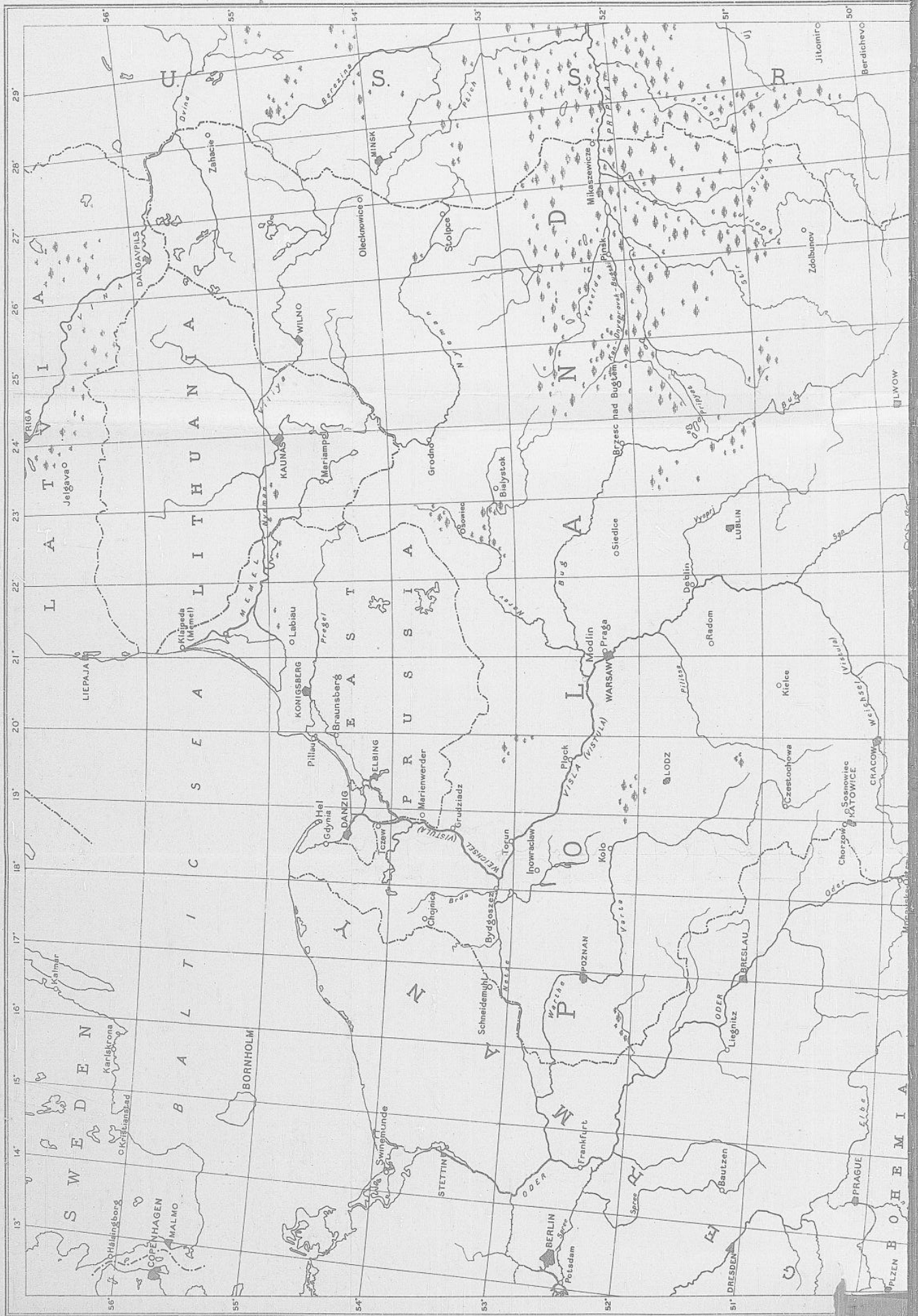
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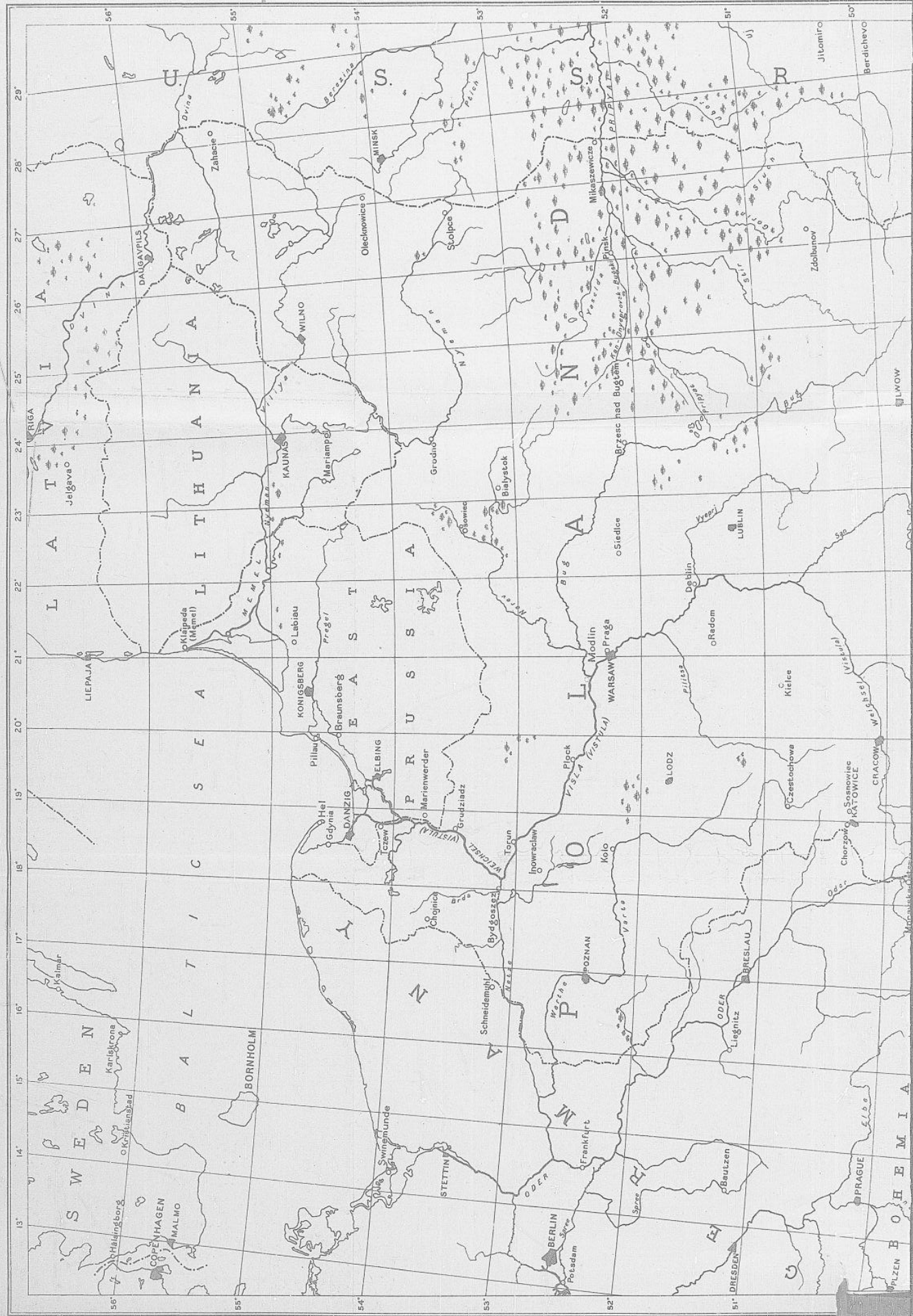
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War Office June, 1939.

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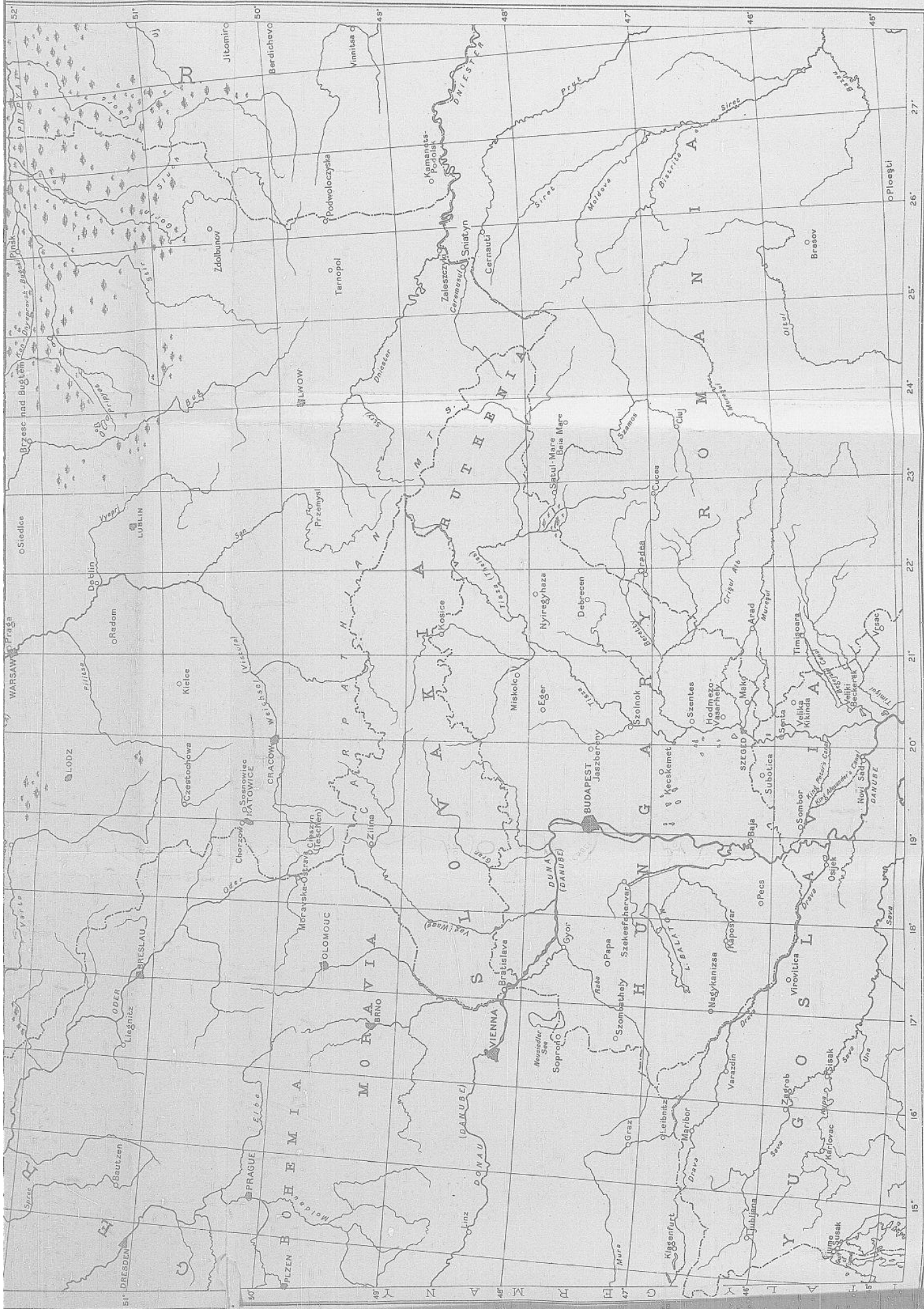


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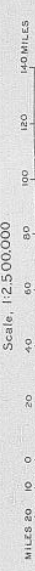
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War-Office, June, 1939.

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